

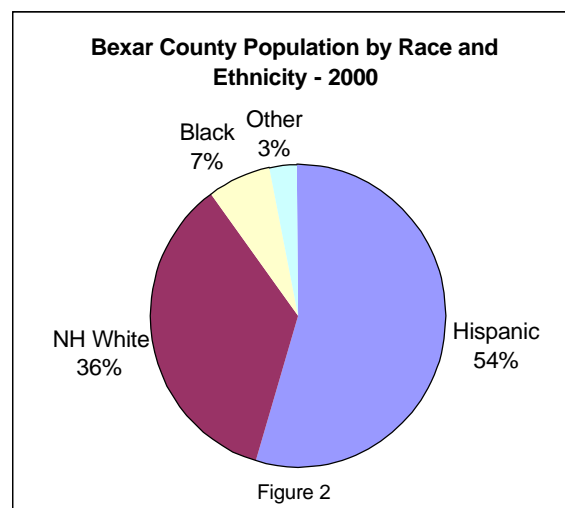
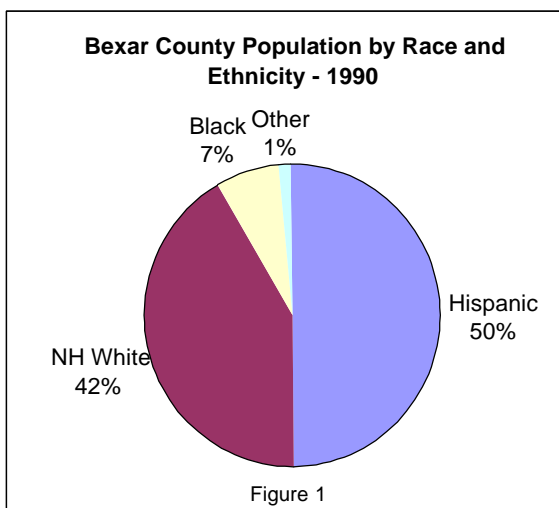
San Antonio Metropolitan Health District Health Profiles 2000 Executive Summary

The challenge of an annual public health assessment is to create a snapshot of our community's current health status, with some indication of the progress we are making, the challenges that remain and a sense of how we compare with the state and the rest of the nation. These pages offer a brief and partial description of this picture we have taken. It was developed through a careful analysis of birth and death records, communicable disease reports, school statistics and a host of other sources. This summary is meant to offer some highlights from a much larger and detailed report – **Health Profiles 2000**, which is available on our website at www.samhd.org. Readers are directed to the full report for a detailed compilation and analysis of statistical data and a review of selected health indicators.

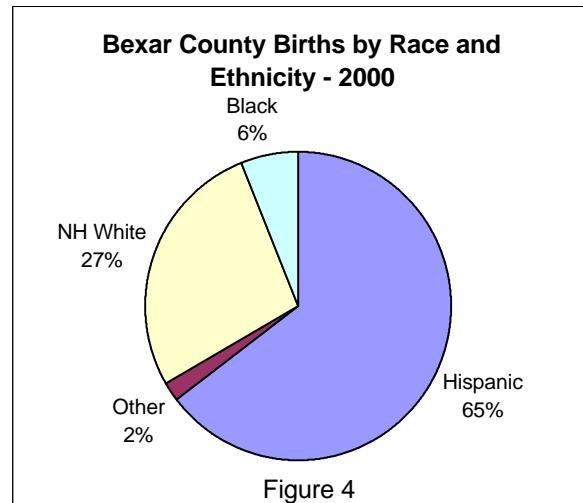
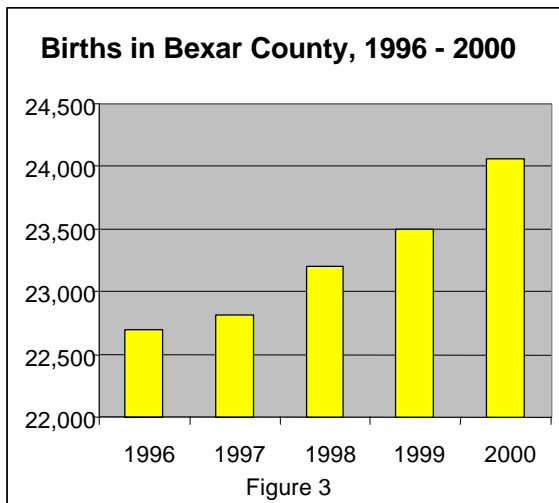
Demographics

Over the past 10 years, Bexar County has grown approximately 17.5% from 1,185,394 to 1,392,931 residents. For the most part, this increase can be attributed to a 29% growth in the Hispanic population. Figure 1 indicates the racial and ethnic makeup of the community in 1990 and Figure 2 provides this information for 2000. A comparison of these charts reveal that over the past 10 years the percentage of Hispanics in the community grew by 4% while the non-Hispanic whites fell by 6%. The number of non-Hispanic whites has actually remained constant while the number of Hispanics has grown through both birth and in-migration by about 168,000. Public health resources will be challenged to insure that these newcomers to our community have access to health care and the opportunity to enjoy good health status. An examination of their socio-economic status indicates that many of these individuals will be dependent on public sector resources for this assurance.

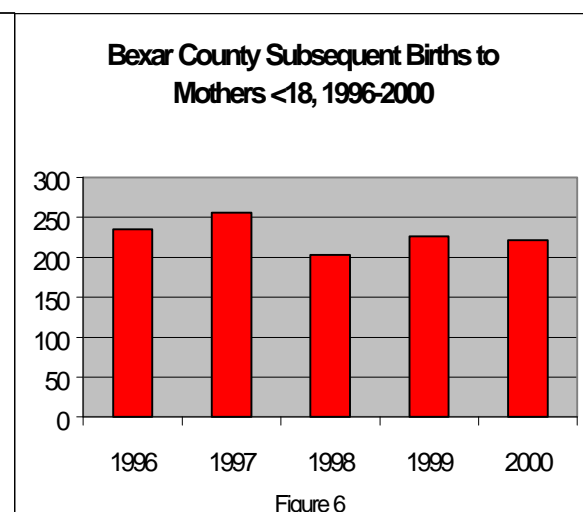
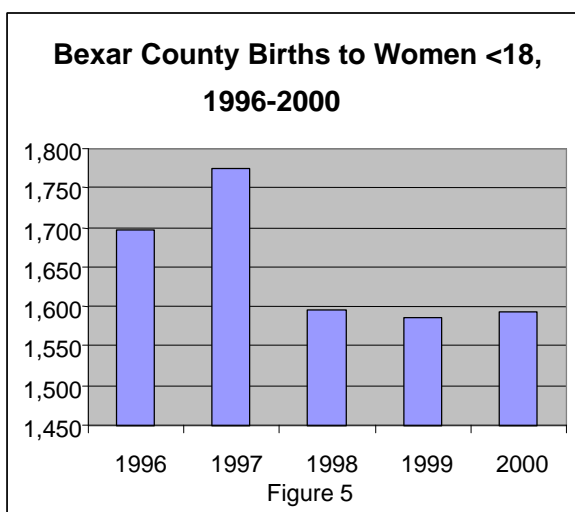
Birth and Maternal Health



The total number of births recorded in the year 2000 exceeded that for any previous year. As Figure 3 below reflects, births grew by 569 in 2000, somewhat more than projected and considerably higher than the 293 birth differential from 1998 to 1999. An examination of Figure 4 will reveal the strong Hispanic contribution to the total number of births. Although Hispanics comprise 54% of the population they account for 65% of all births. The Bexar County Hispanic population is young and a high proportion are in the prime childbearing years.

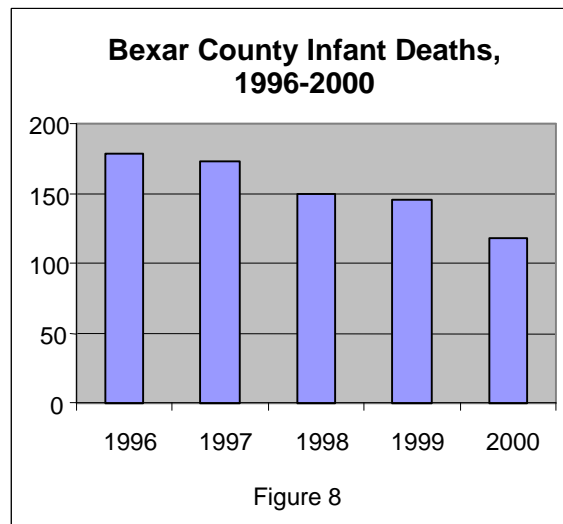
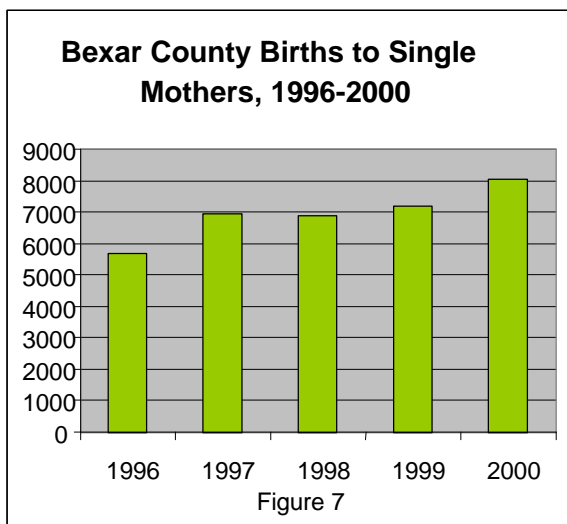


Births to school-age women (age<18) remains a significant public health concern and a high priority for educational efforts and early intervention programs. As Figure 5 indicates, this number has stabilized, especially in view of the increase in overall births. However, in comparison to other parts of the country, Bexar County births to young mothers remains unacceptably high. Figure 6 points out another troubling indicator, the number of young mothers giving birth to second and subsequent children in close birth intervals. The personal and familial stress that can result from these conditions can certainly contribute to the burdens that these young parents must shoulder.



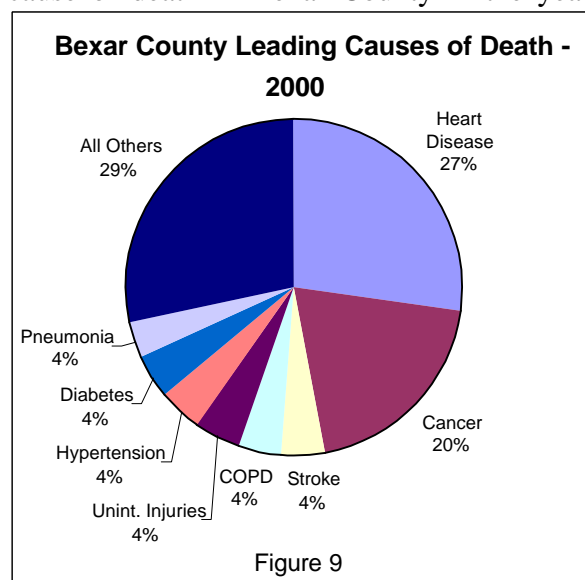
Public health authorities also have always considered births to single women as a sentinel indicator. There is the concern that many of these mothers do not enjoy the family support and resources to adequately provide for the child, especially in instances where they are already responsible for one or more older children. Figure 7 points out that births to single women rose sharply in 2000, a trend that will impact social service agencies, school systems and other community institutions.

On a more positive note, infant deaths in Bexar County dropped from 145 in 1999 to only 118 in 2000. Although all infant deaths are tragic, and many are preventable, Figure 8 demonstrates that this community can be proud of its progress in this regard. The 2000 infant mortality rate of 4.9/1000 live births is close to the national Healthy People 2010 goal of 4.5. We hope to see this positive indicator sustained in the years ahead.



Deaths

Heart disease continued to be the leading cause of death in Bexar County in the year 2000. Cancer maintained its number two position. Unintentional injuries, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, stroke and diabetes were other leading causes of death. Many of these deaths could have been prevented or at least postponed through healthier life style choices. Education and prevention initiatives targeting tobacco, alcohol, illicit drugs, poor nutrition and sedentary lifestyles must be maintained and strengthened. Both parents and schools need to continually reinforce these messages. Figure 9 provides a graphic representation of the leading causes of death.



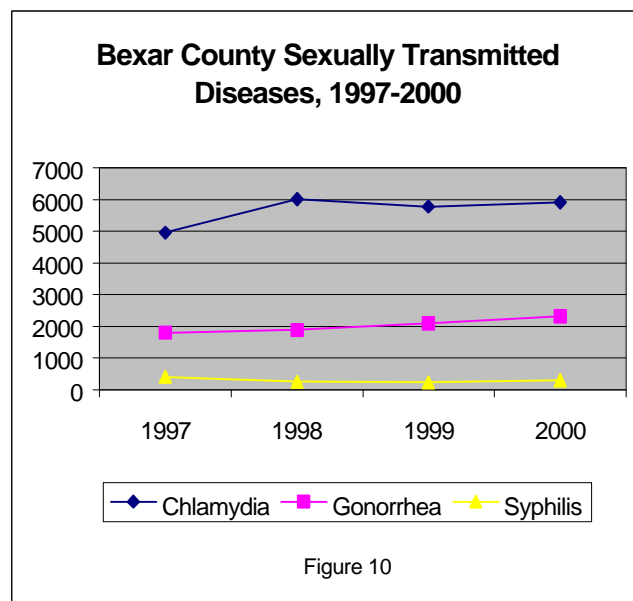
An examination of the leading causes of death by age groups can be especially informative. The leading cause of death for children ages 1-4 was non-motor vehicle accidents. In the age groups 5-14 and 15-24, motor vehicle accidents accounted for the most deaths. Accidents (motor vehicle and all others combined) led with the most fatalities in age group 25-44. Among age groups 45-64 and 65-74 years, cancer claimed the largest number of victims. At age 75 and above heart disease took the greatest toll. Our analysis also revealed that deaths from diabetes mellitus increased by 21% (from 275 to 350); deaths due to accidents increased by 32% (from 153 to 225); suicides increased by 17% (from 96 to 116); and homicides fell by 16% (from 96 to 81). Many of these deaths could have been prevented through targeted community efforts directed to populations at risk. Indeed, the quality and duration of life for many of our older residents could be greatly enhanced through more programs to address chronic illnesses such as heart disease and diabetes along with the commitment to keep the elderly connected and part of the community.

Health Profiles 2000 has an expanded section devoted to cancer this year. Cancer of the trachea, bronchus and lung claimed the most lives (471), followed by cancer of the rectum (213) and breast (170). These figures more than justify continued public health investments to promote abstinence from tobacco products and encouragement of mammograms for women at risk.

Communicable Diseases

Although the number of AIDS cases has dropped to 167 in the year 2000 from 211 in 1999, HIV, the precursor to AIDS, has increased from 193 in 1999 to 319 in 2000. Clearly, while there has been dramatic breakthroughs in the treatment arena for persons with AIDS, we are still experiencing unacceptable levels of HIV infection among at risk populations. Many of the young, in particular, seem not to have internalized the messages of safe sex and have an unrealistic confidence in their ability to avoid the very real dangers and deadly consequences involved. Other sexually transmitted diseases, including chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis, have all been on the rise as shown in Figure 8.

As a result of an aggressive education and outreach campaign encouraging testing, we have seen a dramatic increase in Hepatitis C cases from a low of 51 in 1999 to 1343 in 2000. Hepatitis C has the potential to replace AIDS as a major public health challenge for the new century and will need to be carefully monitored.



San Antonio continues to enjoy high levels of protection from vaccine preventable diseases, especially among our children. Only three cases of mumps and 29 cases of pertussis (whooping cough) were reported in 2000. Hepatitis A cases have declined while the numbers for Hepatitis B have remained fairly constant. As immunization protection becomes more common we hope to see these numbers decrease further.

Environmental Health

Environmental health issues continue to occupy more of our attention and resources. This reflects growing public awareness and sensitivity to the very real health consequences brought on by contamination and environmental degradation. Environmental monitoring and surveillance in neighborhoods surrounding Kelly Air Force Base, including health assessments in specially designed environmental health clinics, have served to offer the public a tangible service, a level of reassurance and a channel of communication to voice their concerns. Our commitment will grow in the year ahead as a clinic dedicated to environmental health assessments is opened and a center for environmental health studies is established.

Animal control is an important component of any effort to protect the environment. In 2000 the recently renamed Animal Care Services Division continued to safeguard the public from rabies and promote responsible pet ownership, including spay/neuter services to aid in the control of stray and unwanted pets. Through this activity we have seen animal bites reduced from 3318 incidents in 1999 to 3202 in 2000 and the number of animals impounded decrease from 47,749 in 1999 to 44,330 in 2000.

In addition, we continued to focus considerable energy on reducing abnormal blood lead levels in children. A well received campaign to educate the public on the dangers of lead based paints and other potential lead exposures has resulted in a decline in the number of cases of children registering high blood lead levels from 917 in 1999 to 529 in 2000.

Closing Comments

The health concerns highlighted in this summary cannot be addressed in isolation. There is a vast array of personal, social and environmental factors that contribute to our physical and emotional health status. Everyone benefits from clean air, pure water and safe food. Control of contagious diseases, reduction of injuries and promotion of healthy lifestyle choices will safeguard the overall health of our residents and improve the opportunities for preventing or changing conditions that can adversely affect them.

We must continue to evolve from a central public health agency model to a more integrated community paradigm reflecting strong partnerships and clear priorities. This includes incorporating the challenging dimensions of mental illness and substance abuse into our overall community health plan. Such a broad-based public health perspective will help assure our citizens an effective safety net and an informed basis for sound decision making.